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## *Charles Daggett: Nevada's First Doctor*

On a bleak night in December 1855, Judge Orson Hyde (1805-1878), the well-known Mormon traveler and missionary, was expecting to die in the mountains. His hope of crossing the Sierra Nevada into the Carson City area was quickly fading before his eyes. With unparalleled will, he managed to trudge on, rolling down snowy inclines, finding his way to the cabin of Dr. Charles Daggett. Daggett had settled in a log cabin situated at the base of the Georgetown cut-off on the emigrant trail. (Because of his prestige in the little community, it took on his name and became known as Daggett Pass.)

Dogs outside of Daggett's house alerted him to the presence of a visitor, and he found the exhausted shell of Hyde. Seeing frozen feet, Daggett did not bring

the man into the warmth of the cabin but took him to a frozen stream, chopped a hole into the ice, and urged the weary traveler to dangle his black board-like swollen legs and feet into the icy water. Once the legs began to feel soft to the touch Daggett helped Hyde into his home where he rubbed the thawed limbs with turpentine and then packed them in fluffy raw cotton.

As simple as the entire ordeal may seem today, Dr. Daggett and Mr. Hyde were unaware at the time that this act was to become one of the first documented cases of medical treatment in the State of Nevada. It was one in a string of firsts which Dr. Daggett would take part in, throughout the remainder of his life in Nevada.

Not only is the case remarkable in that it is the first

known medical treatment in what is now Nevada, but it also is a textbook example of how frostbite is treated in similar circumstances today. The treatment of frostbite is a process of gradual warming rather than sudden heat application. In fact, over a hundred years ago Russian fishermen knew that sudden warming of frozen fish resulted in mushy flesh, while slowly warming the flesh resulted in firmer more normal meat. What is remarkable is that a doctor who lived nearly one hundred and fifty years ago was able to apply the best medical knowledge to treat frozen feet in that manner.

Born in Vermont in 1806 Charles Daggett graduated from the Berkshire Medical College in Massachusetts, where he also received his law degree. In 1851 he moved west with a man known only as Gay settling in the area then known as Mormon Station, a few miles south of Genoa. Daggett and his companion settled in the log cabin Hyde

stumbled upon shortly after their move to Mormon Station. Kinsbury Road, where the cabin was located, was a trail that had been established shortly before Daggett moved to the community.

Dr. Daggett was selected as Prosecuting Attorney, County Assessor, and Tax Collector of Carson County on September 20, 1855. His value to Orson Hyde as the tax collector was enhanced by Daggett's not being a member of the LDS faith. People in Carson Valley had never paid taxes before and were outraged. Dr. Daggett's life was openly threatened over this. Because of the reluctance of the locals to come under "Mormon Law" almost everyone on the first Mormon Ticket was a non-Mormon. Dr. Daggett became Nevada's first "resident" attorney on November 2, 1855, hours before he tried his first case. (The first lawyer was Col. L. A. Norton, a "temporary" resident from Placerville.)

One of his last known distinctions occurred when he was appointed a member of the Committee of Arrangements for the formation of the Second Convention to form a separate territory out of the Utah Territory. With Dr. Daggett's persistence, this territory became the State of Nevada.

After his political career he settled down in the Genoa area and there is no official surviving document attesting to the year or age at which he died.

(Ryan Davis was the author of this article, but Guy Rocha supplied the source of the article, and further information was later supplied by Robert Ellison of the Nevada Library and Archives.)

## More on *Mollie's Folly*

We are always glad to hear from our readers. Following is an email we received from Guy L. Rocha, Asst. Administrator for Nevada Archives & Records.

"I read with great interest the article entitled "The Mollie Folly" by Ryan Davis. I wanted to know more about this woman so I looked for her prison inmate case file. Mollie was a Black woman, age 23 in 1908, sentenced to 10 years in prison in Carson City for 2nd degree murder in Winnemucca, Nevada. Her last name was Harrison not Marrison [a typo in the 1910 Reno Evening Gazette story] because the story in the Carson City News of Dec. 11, 1910 has Harrison as Mollie's surname.

Prison." In 1910, and for many years after, the only state prison facilities in Nevada were in Carson City. Dr. McClean [Maclean] mentions the operation in his report in 1910, which is part of the Prison Warden's biennial report in the Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly for 1911.

"In Harrison's prison record when she was seeking release from prison in 1911, she mentions the medical procedure and that she still has health problems despite the surgery. There is nothing more about the operation. It appears she was released from prison in 1913 as there are no records in her file after that date."

Further research by *Grease-wood* staff reveals the following information. The surgeon was Dr. Donald Maclean (1872-1938), the father of longtime Reno surgeon,



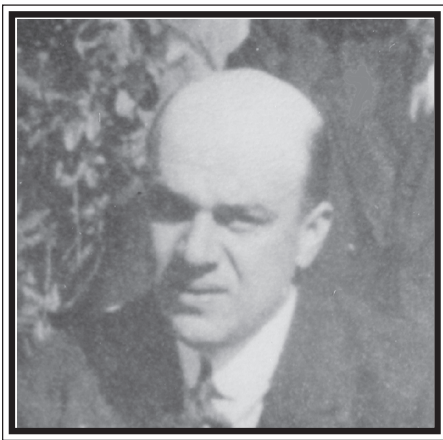
Side and front view of Mollie Harrison from prison record.

"Dr. Donald McClean [Maclean] was the resident doctor at the State Prison in Carson City and not the "Humboldt State

Kenneth Maclean (1914-1985). The prison record indicates that Mollie "Killed a negro in her tent in Winnemucca with a knife." It



Dr. George McKenzie



Dr. Reine Hartzell

further states under "marks, scars, moles, deformities, etc. Breasts abnormally large." She was paroled in July 1911 from her second-degree murder conviction.

Photos above are Drs. McKenzie and Hartzell, who performed the surgery.

**Two New Book Releases**  
***The Cutting Edge and***  
***Better Medicine***

See page 4 for details

# **JACK C. GILBERT, M.D.**

## ***Twenty-six Years of Devoted Service in Surprise Valley***

Submitted and edited by Pat Barry, Fort Bidwell

Information from the Modoc County Record, 1/8/81

Born October 27, 1919, in Manhattan, Kansas, Jack Clinton Gilbert was the oldest child of Roy and Ella Gilbert. When Jack was a child, the family moved to Whittier, California. His mother died of cancer when he was ten years old, and his father raised the three children, instilling in them the value of an education.

Jack graduated from Whittier High School where he was valedictorian of his class. He continued his education at UCLA, but his schooling was interrupted by World War II when, in 1943, he joined the U.S. Army. During Jack's time in the service, he completed a course for Medical Corps candidates. While on duty in England, he met a nurse named Rosalind Robertson, and after his honorable discharge from the army, Jack returned to England where he and Rosalind were married.

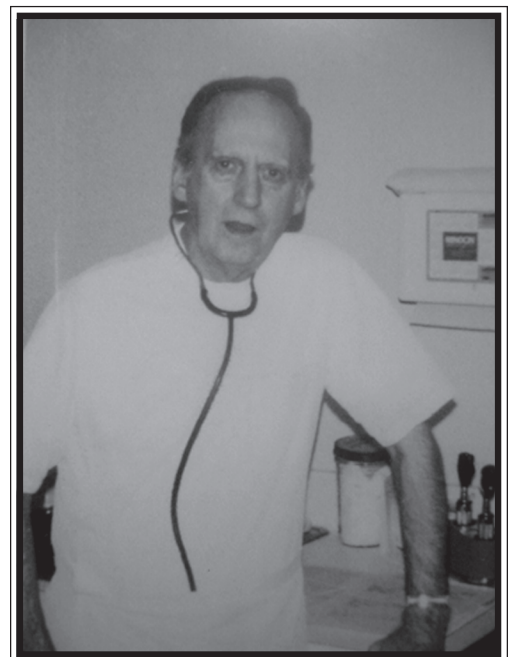
Upon return to the states, Jack continued his medical education and graduated from the University of Southern California with B.A. and M.A. degrees. He received his M.D. degree in 1951, from Hahnemann Medical College in Pennsylvania. In 1952, Dr. Gilbert completed internships at Seaside Memorial Hospital in Long Beach and Los Angeles County General Hospital. He also completed residencies in surgery and anesthesiology at Seaside Memorial Hospital and contagious diseases at Los Angeles County General Hospital.

He received fellowships in radiology and nuclear medicine at Santa Ana Community Hospital. A two-year assistantship was accomplished in general practice serving as radiologist for a group practice.

In 1952 Dr. Gilbert's first private practice was with a group in Sierra Madre which lasted three years. Hearing of a vacancy in Northern California, Dr. Gilbert applied for and was accepted as Modoc County's health officer.

Dr. Gilbert arrived in Cedarville on August 6, 1955, and by this time, his family consisted of a wife and three children. Dr. Gilbert had hoped that by coming to a small town, he would be less busy and could pursue his love of research, but this was not to be.

*to be continued*



Jack C. Gilbert, M.D.



## *Great Basin History of Medicine September Meeting*

The September 2003 dinner-lecture meeting at the Eldorado was a success as over ninety students, faculty, and guests attended making this our largest audience in fifteen years. The

subject of the talk by Professor Ove A. Nedergaard from Denmark was "Curare – *The Flying Death*." The lecture highlighted: (1) The preparation and use of curare as an arrow poison; (2)

European Explorers' description of curare; (3) Collection of curare in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; (4) The initial clinical uses; (5) Pharmacological investigations of the effect of curare; (6) Preparation and biological assay of curare; and (7) Introduction of curare in shock therapy of psychiatric disorders and in surgery.

### *Book Signing*

*Cutting Edge: Reflections and Memories by Doctors on Medical Advances in Reno;*

Where: WMC's Resource Center;  
When: December 5, 4-6 PM.

*Better Medicine: The History of the University of Nevada School of Medicine;*

Where: Pennington Library Foyer at the UNSOM;  
When: December 9, 4-6 PM.



Drs. David Westfall and Ove A. Nedergaard

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